

HOME-FROM-ROME LEWIS HITS THREE AGAINST WYCOMBE

By ARGUS

Walthamstow Avenue 4, Wycombe Wanderers 1

GREAT BRITAIN'S Olympic Games star Jim Lewis flew home from Italy in time to plague Wycombe Wanderers at Walthamstow on Saturday. Jim, the noblest Roman of them all, scored a 12th-minute goal which looked several yards off-side, completed a hat-trick, fluffed a penalty kick and provided the major difference between two teams who persevered in playing a velvety brand of on-the-carpet soccer.

The score flatters Avenue beyond belief. A combination of Lewis-jitters, and lazy finishing cost Wycombe a point they deserved through skilful approach work and refusal to quit.

Even when they were three goals down at half time, Wanderers kept moving forward with tremendous spirit.

If only they had had a Lewis operating in the middle Wycombe would have been well on top.

Paul Bates, who did everything but score, dribbled beautifully and had the Avenue fans singing his praises, but he could seldom manoeuvre for a scoring shot. And when he did—nimble Garry McGuire, the home goalkeeper, was usually too quick for him.

POWER EDGE

There was little to choose for craft between either attack and the game glistened with thoughtful and enterprising football. Avenue certainly had the edge in power thanks to the direct tactics of Lewis and flying left wing Harvey—as elusive an opponent as John Beck will find this season.

Wycombe's forwards tried desperately hard to find their St. Albans goal touch. Inside men Michael Rockell and Cliff Trott pounded away energetically until the final whistle and were only denied goals by the uncanny reflexes of McGuire.

The one forward line weakness was Len Worley, a ghost of the brilliant young man who earned his cap for England. Full back Bambridge marked him into extinction. For a subdued Worley there was no escape.

SHOCKING LUCK

Indifferent defensive covering cost at least two of Avenue's goals but the hard pressed Wanderers defence was not helped by some shocking luck.

Apart from being beaten by the Lewis "offside" score the heroic Ken Brown twice dived his long body onto fierce shots, only to see the ball twist away and into goal.

Walthamstow lived dangerously in the early stages. Tomlin's craft was soon evident and McGuire had to pluck the ball off the feet of Bates' after the winger had sent the centre forward away. Then an immaculate header from Trott was intercepted

on the Avenue goal-line by Bambridge.

The first Lewis goal shocked Wycombe and especially pivot John Bartholomew, who looked on in horror as Lewis, seemingly yards offside, checked, blessed his good luck and then left Brown helpless.

Avenue kept up a blistering offensive, and in the 30th minute Lewis flashed into an open space, hit Brown with his drive and saw the ball roll gently into the net.

Before Minall added a scrambled third goal on the stroke of half time the Avenue goal had some remarkable escapes as Bates, Tomlin and Rockell weaved their patterns.

DELAYED TONIC

But the all-important tonic goal was denied Wycombe until the 66th minute when Trott scored in the goalmouth from a Worley's pass. The battling Trott had only just been foiled by McGuire who snatched a superb header from under his crossbar.

Brown made a series of fine saves as Avenue swept back onto the attack but he had no chance at all with a 75th minute Lewis scorcher or with a spot-kick, awarded for hands, which sun-tanned Jim sent yards wide of goal.

This game was very much a repetition of the game at Walthamstow last season when Avenue won 4-0 — Wycombe shared the skills, the applause, the balance of play... everything but the goals.